

The Hegel Dictionary. By Glenn Alexander Magee (London: Continuum, 2010), x + 270 pp. \$29.95/£18.99 paper.

Glenn Alexander Magee's *Hegel Dictionary* is published as part of the recently launched and still expanding series, Continuum Philosophy Dictionaries, which already includes volumes devoted to luminaries such as Sartre, Gadamer, and Derrida, with many more titles on the great and the good of so-called 'Continental' philosophy about to go to press. Though the title of the book is unlikely to mislead anyone, it is perhaps worth stating that such works are "dictionaries" in a rather figurative sense, and that perhaps a more accurate way of thinking about them is as alphabetically ordered reference books. If anything, this only heightens their appeal. Who could not imagine a situation when, reading Hegel, one would benefit from having to hand a collection of concise, accessible and yet scholarly entries dealing with key Hegelian terms and concepts, his major works, and the philosophical figures that make up the intellectual milieu of which he is a part? For many readers of Hegel, though, this is not something that has to be imagined, as it has been a reality since the publication of Michael Inwood's *Hegel Dictionary* (Blackwell) almost twenty years ago. What those readers will no doubt be wondering is whether there is any reason to acquire a second *Hegel Dictionary*?

There are, I think, at least two reasons for doing so. Firstly and most obviously, given the complexity of Hegel's thought, having the same thing competently explained in two different ways is likely to help the non-specialist reader develop a more nuanced and rounded understanding of the issues involved, thus making the experience of reading Hegel all-the-richer. Secondly, Magee's *Hegel Dictionary* is not in any way intended to supersede Inwood's book. Its target audience is, in fact, quite different, as Magee himself explains in his Suggestions for Further Reading: "Inwood's *Dictionary* differs from the present volume in being geared more towards graduate students and professional scholars" (265–66). Magee states clearly in the Introduction that his book is "primarily intended for undergraduate philosophy students" and that this has determined which

terms and concepts to include and which to exclude (8). Thus, for anybody involved in the difficult business of teaching Hegel, this book makes for essential reading: not only does it do a highly admirable job of explaining difficult ideas in a way that is likely to be useful in the classroom but, perhaps more importantly, it is the book that many of your students will be turning to in an attempt to try to fill in the inevitable gaps. It is surely worth reading for that reason alone.

Filling in the gaps for undergraduates undergoing "initiation" into the labyrinthine world of Hegel's philosophy is, therefore, what the book is intended to do, and it does it very well. An eighteen-page student-friendly Introduction begins by setting out the importance of Hegel, briefly touching upon some of his major ideas such as "dialectic," "Absolute Idea," and "Spirit," before moving on to say something about his legacy and influence. The Introduction then offers guidance on how to use the *Hegel Dictionary*, stating unapologetically that what is being offered is a metaphysical, as opposed to a non-metaphysical, reading of Hegel, and concludes by giving a brief, though lively and informative, overview of his life and writings, including background information about the famous Pantheism Controversy.

The alphabetical entries are, on the whole, exegetical rather than critical and are only lightly referenced. Stylistically, they tend towards the informally pedagogic. In the entry on the Absolute Idea, for instance, we have phrases such as "To put the matter again, in simpler terms," "When all is said and done" (25), and "In short—and to put the matter figuratively," none of which is likely to appeal much to a Hegel specialist, of course, but that, as we have established, is not the point. From a student's perspective this calm, reiterative and confidence-inspiring language will be very appealing. It has also been wisely assumed that if the *Hegel Dictionary* is going to help the reader gain a surer footing in Hegel's system, that system cannot be thought of as entirely closed, and so there are useful entries on Aristotle, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hölderlin, Spinoza, and Marx, for instance (there are notable omissions in this regard—no Jacobi or Friedrich Schlegel for example—but considered on the basis of what undergraduate students are most likely

to find useful, this is neither serious nor particularly surprising).

The inclusion of entries dealing with famous images and phrases in Hegel's work is also very welcome. There are entries explaining the background and what is meant by "foaming chalice," "the owl of Minerva," and "beautiful soul," for instance. At the end of the book there is a Chronology and a brief but useful section offering Suggestions for Further Reading, which includes a brief description of each book listed. Sadly, there is no index, but this minor gripe does not stop the *Hegel Dictionary* from being one of the most useful single-volume resources available today for undergraduate students approaching Hegel for the first time.

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The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere. By Judith Butler, Jürgen Habermas, Charles Taylor, and Cornel West (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), viii + 137 pp. \$19.50/£13.50 paper.

In recent years there has been an increasing interest in the public importance of religion and the meaning of the public and its relation to the private. *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere* offers an opportunity to meet eminent philosophers and scholars confronting this key concern: what role does—or should—religion play in our public life? The current volume is the result of a public symposium between Jürgen Habermas, Charles Taylor, Judith Butler, and Cornel West that took place in New York, 22 October 2009. The event was cosponsored by New York University's Institute for Public Knowledge, the Social Science Research Council, and Stony Brook University.

Jürgen Habermas, well known for his conception of "the public sphere," considers the ambiguous legacy of "the political" in the modern world. In his *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (English edition 1991) he defined the public sphere as

an open space in which all reasons could be expressed and heard. Many critics, though, noted his "neglect of religion" as well as his "antireligious assumptions," though they later on noted his increasing interest in questions of religion. One example of this change is found in his dialogue with Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (today Pope Benedict XVI), *The Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion* (2006). Recognizing that religion has not withered away, Habermas has more and more stressed the importance of cultivating a "post-secular stance," counting on the global vitality of religion and emphasizing "the importance of translating the ethical insights of religious traditions with a view to their incorporation into a post-metaphysical philosophical perspective."

Charles Taylor, in the following chapter, argues for a radical redefinition of secularism. Democratic societies, according to him, remain organized around a strong "philosophy of civility," a normative belief linked to the "modern moral order." Taylor is of the opinion that regimes deserving the label "secularist" should not be conceived as "bulwarks against religion" but rather as those responding "in a principled fashion to the irreversible and ever growing internal diversity of modern societies." According to Taylor, there is a need to balance freedom of conscience and equality of respect, "in particular so as not to needlessly limit the religious freedom of immigrant minorities whose religious practices have in some cases been taken to violate historically established secular norms and institutional arrangements."

Judith Butler explores the possibility of religious perspectives for renewing cultural and political criticism, touching upon, among other things, the shadings between public criticism of Israeli state violence and a critique of this condemnation as anti-Semitic or anti-Jewish. Finally, Cornel West defends civil disobedience and emancipatory theology. As stated in the introductory chapter, "What makes his contribution both distinct and powerful is that West here embodies the power of religious voice in the public sphere." Religious perspectives, according to West, provide distinctive moral visions and "an empathetic and imaginative power that confronts hegemonic powers always operating."